

**Town of Lincoln**

**Budget Board Meeting**

**March 29, 2006**

**Members Present:**

**Ken Booth Jack Newman Carl Brunetti Cheryl Ethier Roberta  
Gosselin Bob Ericson**

**Greg Leonard Mary Varr Joe Dziobek Linda Noble Claudette Lussier**

**No members were absent.**

**There was a School Subcommittee preceding the Budget Board meeting. The following are notes from the meeting:**

**Jack Newman noted that if there were additional responsibilities added to a position, then there should be a pay increase, therefore if a position loses responsibilities, their compensation should be decreased.**

**Also, because the Business Manager had more responsibilities when an Assistant was recommended by the audit, it was questioned whether the new position was needed.**

**Georgia Fortunato's new position title is Director of Personnel and Student Services**

**The Subcommittee went over a spreadsheet and information provided by the schools.**

**The subcommittee wanted to know what the obligated column was for.**

**Cheryl noted that professional development should all be spent by government requirement and isn't.**

**Mary noted that the daily substitute information is provided, but long-term substitute information is also needed.**

**Cheryl noted that any planned vacation was already included in the substitute figures.**

**The subcommittee came to a consensus that the worksheet didn't seem entirely accurate.**

**The Budget Board meeting began at 7:30 with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Finance Director Steve Woerner.**

**Ken Booth welcomed the Town Administrator and her staff to the Budget Board meeting.**

**The Budget Board wanted to discuss questions with the municipal budget for each department.**

**Town Administrator:**

**There were no questions.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that the salary warrant has been passed, and that the contracts have not yet been settled so the ranges were made within the confines of the Administrator's proposed budget.**

**Town Planner**

**Claudette Lussier asked why Professional Services had a negative balance in the expended column.**

**Steve Woerner noted that it was a reversal of an accounting entry due to the time of the expense's occurrence.**

**Ken Booth noted that there should be an explanation ready as to why the number is not showing correctly because the taxpayers may question the line.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that they could change the way the number is shown so that it will be corrected in the budget book distributed at the Financial Town Meeting.**

**Roberta Gosselin stated that she preferred that it be corrected so that there was no confusion about the line item.**

**Ken Booth asked how far in advances the Town Planner was with GIS Mapping.**

**Al Ranaldi stated that he has implemented all plans and has taken a 2-day workshop and are currently working on integrating the program with the internet. He does anticipate moving forward with it next year.**

**Ken Booth asked if functional maps are currently available for anyone who may request them.**

**Al Ranaldi stated that there were maps available, but that it has not been advertised publicly yet.**

**Ken Booth noted that the Conservation Commission needs updated maps, and Al Ranaldi noted that the Planning Department does not have the ability currently to put in the man hours needed to do that.**

**Ken Booth noted that some towns hire consultants to complete the mapping work.**

**Steve Woerner noted that he has developed a process for GIS**

Mapping that is just as effective and less costly and that the auditors seem to agree with.

Al Ranaldi noted that open space is on the list to be done, but that currently the department is working on plat maps fused being fused with zoning maps.

Roberta Gosselin noted that there was no money requested for the Town Planner for GIS Mapping and she asked if the Al Ranaldi, the Town Planner, was comfortable with the request.

Al Ranaldi noted that he was comfortable with the request because he will not be doing any new mapping this year, but he did note that he would need more time to use the system in place.

Ken Booth agreed, and even thought that in the future, a position should be added so that the GIS Mapping is put to good use and does not get out of date.

## **Personnel**

Sue Sheppard stated that the police contract is in arbitration that can last up to a year, and will relate to the 3% compounded COLA.

Roberta Gosselin asked if most police contracts have a COLA.

Sue Sheppard stated that most do, but most do not have a compounded COLA.

Joe Dziobek asked who handled the arbitration.

Sue Sheppard stated that there are 3 arbitrators involved, one for each side and one neutral arbitrator.

Sue Sheppard also felt that addressing the compounded COLA now

**was the right thing to do for the town.**

**Joe Dziobek asked if the Administration had a sense of the budget in the coming year for legal costs.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that legal costs are not factored in yet, and that it would be difficult to get an estimate.**

**Sue Sheppard also noted that most of the legal costs with arbitration would be shown in this year's budget, but some would also be in next year's budget and she recommended \$30,000 for next year because she is uncertain of what the figure will be, and it will also depend on grievances filed.**

**Sue Sheppard did feel that it was necessary to take a good look at legal services because consults are needed so often now due to the nature of society.**

**Roberta Gosselin felt that because it was near the end of the fiscal year, there should at least be an estimate of what legal services will cost for the year.**

**Steve Woerner stated that the auditors get their information from the attorneys and legal consultants and that the town is not privy to that information until then.**

**Roberta Gosselin still felt that some cases are probable and estimated.**

**The Town Solicitor will have a list of all pending cases and suits.**

**Cheryl Ethier wanted to know where the Assistant Solicitor named to the schools was being paid from.**

**Steve Woerner stated that it was paid for in the school's budget because that is where the expense is incurred.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that there is statewide case out for excise taxes that could cost as much as \$250,000.**

**Joe Dziobek asked if there was a contingency fund for any unexpected settlements or lost cases.**

**Steve Woerner noted that allocations in the audit would fix overexpenditures.**

#### **Town Clerk**

**Claudette Lussier asked what Equipment and Recordings are used for.**

**Karen Allen replied that it was for land evidence recordings.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if Karen Allen was comfortable with a lower number for Equipment and Recordings.**

**Karen Allen stated that mortgages are slowing down and it was noted that the outsourcing of documentation goes out on a regular basis and not all at the end of the year.**

**Karen Allen noted that there is legislation written that would require all polling places open for primary elections, and would force all schools to be closed so that the ones that are polling stations could be used.**

**There are 16 polling stations, and Roberta Gosselin asked if the town needed 16 stations.**

**Karen Allen stated that when there was redistricting, they were not allowed to combine any polling places so they cannot have less.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that there is a stipend that will be added into the base salaries after the contract is ended, and that it would be a**

**one-time stipend.**

**The town is still having issues with the prescription drug plan in contract negotiations with the laborers.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if the Deputy Town Clerk was one of the salaries that has not been increased yet and therefore would need to be refigured in the expended column.**

**Sue Sheppard stated that the Deputy Town Clerk is not a laborer position and also noted that she expects the contract to be settled before the Financial Town Meeting.**

## **Finance**

**Claudette Lussier noted that there has been no Professional Development expended.**

**Steve Woerner stated that it had been moved and expended through Personnel.**

**Sue Sheppard stated that the Information Technology Manager would be taking over the police department's information technology as well because a few police officers were taking care of it but no longer want the responsibility.**

**Roberta Gosselin wanted to know what Grant Matching was for.**

**Steve Woerner noted that it was for the town's share to contribute for when they receive smaller grants that stipulate that the town needs to spend money to get them. They come from the state and are sometimes federal funds.**

**Ken Booth noted that Equipment has been budgeted at 0 in the past because it was expended through other lines but noticed that there**

**was \$16,000 expended this year.**

**Steve Woerner stated that the lines could be combined.**

**Claudette Lussier asked if Grant Matching should fall under Grants and Contributions.**

**Ken Booth noted that it was actually an expenditure, because the town has to spend the money to get the grants.**

**Roberta Gosselin wanted to know when the town anticipated going to issuance for the \$3 and \$5 million bonds.**

**Steve Woerner stated that they may be issued next year along with the middle school bond to cut down on issuing fees, and the town would need a plan of how to use the money.**

**Sue Sheppard stated that there would be a plan by April or May and that it would be presented to the Town Council.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that the bond was specific that buildings and sewer infrastructure were to be addressed.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked what is anticipated for the 2006-2007 debt service.**

**Steve Woerner stated that he would have to research that.**

**Steve Woerner noted that the extra funds under Purchasing Agent were for severance pay for the retired Purchasing Agent.**

## **Police**

**The police have not received their expected raises yet either due to contract negotiations.**

**Ken Booth asked if gas and oil increases are reflected in all departments. John MacQueen stated that it was.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that there should be 4 Sergeants in the budget because 4 are hired.**

**Cheryl Ethier questioned the increase in radio maintenance.**

**Ken Booth thought it may be due to new portable systems.**

## **Rescue**

**The Budget Board always questions overtime in this department because it is high, and the explanation is that staffing is more difficult with rescue personnel and it would be difficult to add more people due to the stipulations of the contract.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that the rescue department recently had 4 employees out of work at once.**

**Roberta Gosselin questioned if \$115,000 was realistic for overtime.**

**Sue Sheppard stated that she would find out the more accurate number from John McCaughey, Rescue Director.**

**Bob Ericson noted that there was more than a 100% increase in fuel costs, but Public Works and Police show less of an increase and wondered why the rescue increase was so high.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that there have been more rescue runs and more mutual aid completed for other towns.**

**Ken Booth noted that when looking at expended, it is a reasonable amount to increase.**

**Claudette Lussier noted that the salary increases for the entire department were only appearing as \$9,000 which seemed low.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that there were 2 captains who retired and**

**whose replacements will be paid less and that the contracts for the rescue department have been settled.**

**Steve Woerner will check on pension contributions because they are going down when salaries are going up.**

### **Pubic Works**

**John MacQueen noted that there is money budgeted for seminars that he does not always go to.**

### **Engineering**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if the size of the Engineering Department was typical for the size of the town.**

**John MacQueen noted that it was a small department relative to the size of the town, but that they do prioritize and hire summer help and get everything that needs to be done completed. Also, space is an issue as there is not really room for more staff.**

### **Code Enforcement**

**The town has to pay for a demolition but then gets reimbursed when the insurance company pays the owner.**

**Steve Woerner noted that there is an additional Building Inspector who works for the town but whose only job is Lincoln Park because of their rapid rate of expansion and necessity of constant inspections.**

**Although the inspector is on the payroll, Lincoln Park reimburses the town.**

**Roberta Gosselin noted that the position could be shown as an Assistant Building Inspector.**

**Steve Woerner noted that Lincoln Park's time of expansion is limited and so the position will not always be needed.**

**John MacQueen noted that the main Building Inspector may retire and the position may then be needed.**

**John MacQueen and Steve Woerner will discuss the position and how to allocate it in the budget.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked when Lincoln Park will complete their expansion. It will be done in June of 2007.**

**Bob Ericson asked if inspections are randomized so that the same person does not always inspect the same properties.**

**John MacQueen did note that all 3 inspectors go to Lincoln Park at least once each week.**

## **Parks and Recreation**

**Claudette Lussier noted that almost all lines are overexpended in the audit.**

**John MacQueen stated that utility increases were one reason, but also that everything for Parks and Recreation used to go to Public Works, Highway Department but now things like fuel and maintenance go through the Parks and Recreation budget.**

**Ken Booth noted that equipment and maintenance is for vehicles, etc. and not for playgrounds or similar items.**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if there were any measures to ensure that the town's gas station is not being used for personal causes.**

**John MacQueen noted that there is a swipe card system and security cameras will be installed.**

**Bob Ericson asked if Chet Nichols Field was monitored separately for electricity use.**

**John MacQueen noted that whoever wants to use the field will be charged for turning the lights on.**

**Ken Booth noted that overtime was high, and one option would be to have the lights on timers so that someone does not have to manually turn them on.**

**Linda Noble suggested staggered shifts so that overtime is not needed for night games, etc.**

### **Animal Control**

**Ken Booth wanted to know when the building would be painted.**

**Linda Noble wanted to know where revenues that are received are in the budget.**

**Steve Woerner noted that there is a revenue line for animal violations. The Animal Control Officers are in the union.**

### **Tree Warden**

**Roberta Gosselin wanted to know what trees are taken care of by the tree warden.**

**The trees are all over town, but no personal property, and about 5 calls are received per week.**

**Ken Booth asked who cuts the trees down that need to be cut down.**

**Steve Woerner stated that the town pays someone to do so, but not every call received necessitates a tree being cut down.**

**Ken Booth suggested having a Public Works employee trained in tree cutting.**

### **Public Buildings**

**Each line item should state “Public” in front of the title.**

**Sue Sheppard was not sure if she should fix the salaries so that the expended amount would reflect the fact that the contracts have not been settled yet because she thought that the contracts would be settled soon.**

**Steve Woerner suggested having a footnote in the budget explaining the situation.**

### **Central Services**

**Steve Woerner noted that the pension is based on hourly employee status, and not pay which would explain the decrease in pension funding when salaries are going up.**

**Greg Leonard noted that the expended amount at the 6 month mark reflects an over budget last year and the decrease this year will correct that.**

**Ken Booth questioned the CDL License increase.**

**John MacQueen noted that each new employee is required to carry a CDL license.**

**Ken Booth wanted to know if the town was on target with the recycling tipping fee or if it would be overexpended.**

**John MacQueen stated that it was a possibility that it would be over but that it is not charged until the last month of the year.**

**John MacQueen noted that the town could charge for anything collected by truck workers that's more than a barrel's worth.**

**Also, the town could charge \$15 for the disposal of appliances like stoves and dryers, but that was rejected by the Town Council.**

**John MacQueen noted that there were 2 recycle trucks broken down and they did not make their quota for a period of time.**

### **Library**

**Roberta Gosselin sat with Becky Boragine, Library Director, and will go over the budget and results with the Budget Board at a later time.**

### **Senior Center**

**Ken Booth suggested that once MacColl Field YMCA expands, the town should move the Senior Center there to take advantage of their available facilities.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that Lincoln does do a lot for the Senior Center considering the small amount that the town spends on it compared with other towns like North Smithfield**

**Sue Sheppard did feel that it was doable to move the Senior Center to the MacColl Field YMCA, and noted that there is already a cooperative program there with the middle school students.**

### **Town Solicitor**

**Roberta Gosselin asked who decided the increase in salary for the**

**Solicitor.**

**Ken Booth wanted to know if the Solicitor staff was paid separately to attend meetings like the Town Council meeting or if they got a weekly check that covered all work.**

**The Assistant Solicitor gets paid hourly.**

**Settlements were put in certain lines by the auditors, and Steve Woerner will discuss with them whether they should be appearing in different lines.**

**Bob Ericson noted that now anything that is over \$2,500 or is a settlement against the town is paid for through the Solicitor.**

**Municipal Court**

**Ken Booth noted that the Municipal Court Judge received a raise from the original salary.**

**The Municipal Court Clerk will retain that position as well as that of Deputy Town Clerk.**

**Bob Ericson asked if there was any compensation time offered for her work as the Court Clerk. There is not.**

**The Town Sergeant cannot go in place of the Solicitor because of specifications.**

**Grants/Contributions**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if the Boys and Girls Club asked for more than they received. They did not.**

**The meal site coordinators are grant funded.**

## **Fixed Charges**

**Roberta Gosselin asked if the cost to issue the bonds would be rolled into the bond amount.**

**Steve Woerner noted that the town has the choice of what they want to do with the bond issuance fee.**

**Carl Brunetti asked if the health care figures were accurate.**

**Steve Woerner stated that he had a detailed schedule if needed.**

**Steve Woerner stated that town was going to go out to bid for workers compensation because the trust was not giving a good enough rate.**

**Roberta Gosselin noted that even though there is a penalty to leave the trust, sometimes it is better in the long run, and suggested combining with the schools to get a better rate.**

## **Capital**

**Ken Booth noted that capital items should be large in amount and have a longer life expectancy.**

**Sue Sheppard noted that it was a true balancing act to try to give something to all departments.**

**Roberta Gosselin suggested paying for larger things over a period of 3 years.**

**Cheryl Ethier asked if any money had been spent on Ballou Avenue drainage issues.**

**John MacQueen stated that there had been money spent out of the highway budget.**

## **Revenues**

**Ken stated that the Municipal Subcommittee had done an analysis and provided Sue Sheppard with their list of modifications.**

**Jack Newman made a motion to defer the approval of the minutes of March 23rd, seconded by Mary Varr. The minutes were deferred.**

**Greg Leonard made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Roberta Gosselin.**

**The meeting adjourned at 10:00**